

Small Group Discussion Questions

Aiken County

What is occurring in your community which addresses these responsibilities and areas for action?

- Spending
- Building schools
- Several community groups
- Pre-school programs
- Teacher training
- Together Aiken County
- Quality of Life
- North Augusta 2000
- Public Education Partners
- Awareness, concerns, support for education
- Summer Institute-teacher training
- Ruth Patrick Science Center
- Week of the Young Child
- Business support of parent volunteerism
- C of C work force development
- 1st Steps and Fatherhood Initiative
- Business mentoring programs and scholarships
- Teacher mentoring (District)
- After school tutoring
- Faith based initiatives
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Salvation Army
- Churches together for Kid's tutoring
- AACAN Conference
- USC-A Diversity Conference
- Ruby Payne Poverty Workshop
- Freedman/PineCrest Parenting Center-GED accomplishment
- Industry employee mentors in elementary schools
- Nuture Home- (Sponsor mental health alliance)
- SC Alliance of Black Educators
- Faith community sponsoring Ruby Payne's Framework for Understanding Poverty Initiatives
- School board sharing workshops
- County wide reading program

What are the critical barriers to fulfilling the commitment in your community?

- Red tape and bureaucracy
- Need to be welcomed and engaged
- Parents need to be good role models
- Garbage on TV/Media
- Lack of adult supervision
- Parental training needed
- More dialog is happening but needs to expand
- Spiritual foundations are missing; need a return to the basics
- Time students spend with teachers
- Retention of teachers in profession

- Allocation of money
- County size
- Transportation
- Effective sponsorship/coordination/leadership
- Resistance to change
- Multiple visions
- Child care after school needs
- Funding
- Geographic size, diversity
- Demographic challenges
- Money
- Facilities (aging and overcrowding)
- Technology
- Lack of financial attention from corporations and foundations
- Political will on a state level
- Information management
- Lack of involvement by local governments, need to take more ownership
- Getting stakeholders (parents) to come out
- Transportation for low income
- Child care
- Parents do not see relevance
- Younger parents
- Time Constraints due to working schedules
- Don't feel welcome at schools and district office (intimidation)
- Too much emphasis on negative

List the 5 most important things your community can do to address the responsibilities of Common Ground.

- Recognize the need
- Identify and prioritize the opportunities
- Enlist and empower those who will make the changes
- Celebrate success
- Don't give up
- Embrace new ideas
- Stay the course
- Identify success stories
- Visit schools/help with needs
- Community awareness of needs based on facts
- Building collaborations to accomplish specific goals
- Get churches actively involved in education (e.g. periodic roundtable of local pastors and school officials)
- Seek sponsors from community for education programs
- Mentoring programs for parents
- Education system more receptive and open to community collaborations
- Dismantle the "WE" and "They" viewpoints
- Find Common Ground
- Unite community-learn who neighbors are
- Learn statistics that impact life (incarceration rate)

List the 5 most important things you as an individual can do to address the responsibilities of Common Ground.

- Support teachers/administrators
- Attend school board meetings

- Do your own research about schools in community
- Identify talent/time commitments
- Learn how to give time/talent
- Point person to take message back to community
- Share life experiences